



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

AFGHANISTAN

SUCCESS STORY

Kabul to Badakhshan in 12 Hours or Less

Bus service on a new USAID-funded road opens a faster route to remote northern Afghanistan.



Photo: USAID/AIRP

A bus traveling between Kabul and Fayzabad arrives in less than 12 hours, quickly transporting people and their goods. The new USAID-funded road on which the bus travels brings improved access to medical care, education, and markets.

A new road and improved linkages to services and markets in central Afghanistan have sparked optimism among residents of Badakhshan's capital city and created new economic opportunities.

A bus trip between Kabul and Fayzabad in Badakhshan, Afghanistan's northernmost province, used to take at least two days. Today, thanks to major road improvements, and a new bus, the travel time to this provincial capital has been reduced to less than 12 hours.

Bordered by the Hindu Kush mountain range, Badakhshan has long been isolated. In fact, older residents can remember a time when the trip from Fayzabad to Kabul took two months. Now, with improvements to a 103-kilometer segment of road connecting Fayzabad to Kishim and points south, the new bus can depart Kabul in the morning, and arrive in Badakhshan that same evening.

Residents of Fayzabad now have improved access to medical care, education, and markets. Another benefit from the road is reduced travel costs. The average price of a one-way bus ticket from Kabul to Fayzabad has dropped from \$40 to \$14.

When USAID launched the road project under its Afghanistan Infrastructure and Rehabilitation Program, everyone knew the task would be daunting. Rock on the route was so fractured it crumbled, and narrow canyons channeled water across the road bed. Opposing rock formations prohibited construction anywhere except over the mountainous terrain, making the project extremely difficult.

Today, after the construction of seven bridges and more than 600 culverts, the Kishim-Fayzabad Road is nearly complete. Fully paved, the road will smoothly link the country's most remote province to the nation's capital, as well as open up access to the border with China.

The improved access means the region's stunning lapis lazuli jewelry will reach more markets. The huge pomegranates for which the region is known will also reach markets in better condition, commanding competitive prices and increasing the incomes of area farmers.

The new road and bus have sparked optimism among residents of the provincial capital city and created new opportunities to improve the local economy. Bright prospects for Badakhshan and its people are now on the horizon.